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INTELLIGENCE REPORT

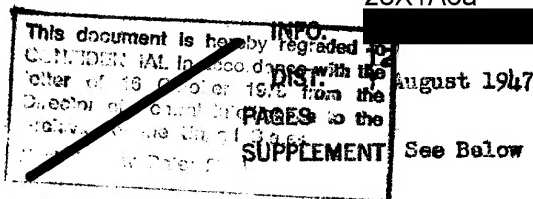
COUNTRY Levant/U.S.S.R.

DATE: 25X1A6a

SUBJECT Current Activities of the
Lebanese Communist Party

25X1A6a

ORIGIN



August 1947

See Below

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Membership

1. In the region of al-Matu al-Ala (Mt. Lebanon) the Lebanese Communist Party has reportedly received a sudden influx of applications for membership. Twenty-seven such requests were submitted in the week of 1-7 July by young men who are known to have belonged to the S.P.P. (al-Hizb al-Qawmi). It is believed that the reason for this is the abrupt change in the policy of the Lebanese Ministry of the Interior toward the S.P.P., which apparently threatened the S.P.P. with repression.
2. Communist authorities have sent Yusuf Hilu and Tannus Diab, both prominent Party members, to Falugha and Hammama (villages about 20 miles east of Beirut) to organize new centers there.

Finances

3. At its last meeting the Central Committee of the Lebanese Communist Party had a serious disagreement over financial matters, according to report. Party finances are in bad shape despite the grant-in-aid received from the Soviet Legation for the 25 May elections. [See [redacted] distributed 31 March 1947.] Following the withdrawal of Communist candidates as a protest after the first round of the elections, Niqola Shawi, Party President, returned one-third of the grant-in-aid to the Soviet Legation, sending the remaining funds to the Syrian Communist Party for their campaign expenses. [See [redacted] distributed 8 July 1947.] Some members disapproved of the latter measure, but a majority did support Shawi. 25X1A2g
4. The Lebanese Communists sent a second grant, this time of LL 5,000, to the Syrian Communist Party. Niqola Shawi and Ra'if Khuri, leading "intellectual communist" in Lebanon, were in Syria for the 7 July elections there. They assisted in the pre-election propaganda campaign.
5. As a result of the financial difficulties faced by the Lebanese Communists, Hasan Kureitem met with Vladimir Virov, main liaison officer between the Soviet Legation and the Lebanese Communist Party. Kureitem explained the Party's position; Virov conferred with Legation authorities, and then assured Kureitem that financial help was forthcoming.

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Party Leadership

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6. There is reportedly a difference of opinion in Communist circles as to the advisability of retaining Nikola Shawi as Party President. Some members believe that Faraj-Allah Hilu, former president, should be reinstated in that office. [Shawi was elected to replace Hilu when the latter went to France in the winter of 1947 on Party business.] Source indicates that Shawi is considering a trip to Paris, and if he goes the problem would be solved. The Soviet Legation is very favorably disposed toward Shawi and if he does leave for Paris it will only be because the Legation is anxious to relieve intra-Party strain.

Conference of Arab Communists

7. If circumstances are favorable the Lebanese and Syrian Communist Parties presumably will hold their annual conference in Damascus and will invite representatives of communist parties in other Arab countries to participate.
8. Khalid Baghdash, President of the Syrian Communists, has suggested that invitations be sent to representatives of the British, French, and American Communist Parties. He has asked Moscow to indicate its attitude toward this idea, but has not, as yet, received an answer.

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